

### **REMARKS**

The Applicants thank the Examiner for the thorough consideration given the present application. Claims 1-3, 5-11, and 14-20 are currently being prosecuted. Claims 1, 2, 9 and 10 are amended, and claims 18-20 are added. Claims 1 and 9 are independent. Claims 4, 12 and 13 were canceled by a previous amendment. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider her rejections in view of the amendments and remarks as set forth herein.

#### **Allowable Subject Matter**

In the Office Action, the Examiner states that claims 2, 3, 5-7, 10, 11, and 14-16 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base and any intervening claim.

As noted below, independent claims 1 and 9 are amended herein to include the allowable subject matter of objected to claims 2 and 10, respectively. Accordingly, independent claims 1 and 9 are in condition for allowance.

#### **Information Disclosure Statement**

It is respectfully requested that the Examiner return an initialed copy of Form PTO 1449 filed on January 7, 2004 in the next official communication.

#### **Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) and §103(a)**

Claims 1-3, 5, 6, 9-12, 14, and 15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Thoe bald (U.S. 6,161,857), and claims 8 and 17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Brumby (U.S. 5,074,407). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

As noted above, independent claims 1 and 9 are amended herein to include the allowable subject matter of objected to claims 2 and 10. Therefore, independent claims 1 and 9 are in condition for allowance.

The Examiner is advised that claims 2 and 10 are amended herein, and claims 18-20 are added herein to set forth additional novel features of the present invention.

Dependent claims 2, 3, 5-8, 10, 11, and 14-20 are also in condition for allowance due to their dependence on allowable independent claims, or due to the additional novel limitations set forth therein.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) and §103(a) are respectfully requested.

All claims of the present application are in condition for allowance.

### **CONCLUSION**

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and that the present application is in condition for allowance.

If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone Carl T. Thomsen (Reg. No. 50,786) at (703) 205-8000.

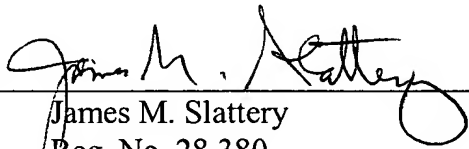
If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for

Serial No. 10/059,325  
Amendment dated June 30, 2004  
Reply to Office Action dated March 31, 2004

Docket No. 0505-0949P  
Group Art Unit 3683  
Page 9 of 9

any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.17, particularly extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,  
BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

By   
James M. Slattery  
Reg. No. 28,380

0505-0949P  
JMS:CTT:ndb:slb



P. O. Box 747  
Falls Church, VA 22040-0747  
(703) 205-8000